



NEWS RELEASE

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GRAPELAND WOMAN GUILTY OF TAX FRAUD

(Lufkin, TX) United States Attorney Matthew D. Orwig announced today that a 45-year-old Grapeland woman has pleaded guilty to tax evasion in the Eastern District of Texas. **DEBRA GODWIN** entered her guilty plea today before United States Magistrate Judge Keith Giblin.

"It is the obligation of every taxpayer to accurately report their earnings and pay their taxes," stated U.S. Attorney Orwig. "When taxpayers fail to pay their share, it puts an unfair burden on those who play by the rules and follow the law."

According to information presented in court, Godwin, while preparing her income tax return for the tax year of 2000, provided a letter to an employee of a tax preparation office that indicated Godwin had nearly \$45,000.00 in federal income tax withholdings. The letter was purported to be from a casino in Shreveport, Louisiana. Investigators were able to establish that this letter was a forgery. This fraudulent tax return subsequently enabled Godwin to receive an income tax refund check of \$15,013.00, based on the withholding she claimed.

"Today's court action sends a message that IRS Criminal Investigation is vigilant in making sure everyone pays their fair share of taxes," said Erick Martinez, Special Agent in Charge of the IRS-CID Dallas Field office. Martinez continued, "There are consequences to disregarding the tax laws of this country

and a federal conviction is one of them."

Godwin could receive up to five years in federal prison and a fine of up to \$250,000.00. A sentencing date has not been set.

The Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation Division investigated this case. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Reynaldo P. Morin.

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